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Conclusions of the High-level Committee on Management at its thirty-sixth session

(Headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, 11 and 12 October 2018)

Executive summary

The High-level Committee on Management met at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris on 11 and 12 October 2018. The Young United Nations network and the United Nations Innovation Network were invited to participate in the discussions. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Reform also joined the meeting.

During the thirty-sixth session, the Committee focused on the following themes linked to reform:

(a) Integrating and mainstreaming business innovation;

(b) Driving change in business operations, especially in the field;

(c) Strengthening the system's capacity for data collection, analysis and protection;

(d) Addressing sexual harassment;

(e) Advancing the duty of care.

The Committee adopted concrete deliverables in each of those areas, as set out below.

Innovation. Following the May 2018 session of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the Committee identified concrete, scalable innovation initiatives for the purpose of simplifying business processes. Among them were the design and piloting of a United Nations digital service centre, the launch of text and voice digitization projects to automate translation services and document management, and the creation of innovation fairs and labs to provide space for staff at all levels to innovate. The Committee also tested parts of a United Nations innovation toolkit, which was demonstrated at the CEB session on 7 and 8 November 2018.

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Driving change in business operations. Together with the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the Committee will promote the mainstreaming of mutual recognition of policies and procedures across the United Nations system. This will reinforce support for the repositioned resident coordinator system. The Committee also launched the development of a system-wide reference model for risk management to serve as a benchmarking tool and to advance risk management in United Nations organizations, in particular in connection with the greater delegation of authority.

Data collection, analysis and protection. The Committee approved the United Nations system "data cube", a new set of United Nations data standards to enable the reporting of financial flows relating to the Sustainable Development Goals by individual organizations and by the system as a whole. The new standards are aligned with those of the International Aid Transparency Initiative and of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and will be a valuable tool for informed decision-making at all managerial levels and for enhanced transparency. The Committee also approved a set of personal data protection and privacy principles as a first step towards a common framework for providing high-level protection of the right to privacy for persons working for, associated with or under the care of the United Nations system. Those principles will also facilitate the ongoing discussion that the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel is conducting with the European Union concerning its General Data Protection Regulation.

Addressing sexual harassment. On behalf of CEB, the Committee adopted a model policy on sexual harassment that will lead to strengthened and aligned sexual harassment policies throughout the United Nations system, expanded the sexual harassment screening tool to include pending allegations of sexual harassment in order to avoid the rehiring of confirmed perpetrators and adopted a draft model code of conduct to prevent sexual harassment during United Nations events, pending further informal consultations with Member States. The Committee also increased its collaboration with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Post-War and Disaster Reconstruction and Rehabilitation and the investigation services of the United Nations system to improve investigative capacity and processes, including enhanced cooperation and the possible pooling of resources among investigation services.

Duty of care. The Committee achieved advances in expanding the duty of care in all environments, including measures affecting national staff, the development of a risk management framework for duty of care, the expansion of psychosocial support for staff and the implementation of measures for the new United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. The Committee also engaged in the repositioning of the UN Cares workplace programme.

Throughout the discussions, it was clear that change in organizational culture is key; changing mindsets is as important for sustainable results as changing systems and policies.

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirty-sixth session at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris on 11 and 12 October 2018. The meeting was chaired by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Management and Chair of the Committee, Jan Beagle, and by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Kelly Clements.

2. The Deputy Director General of UNESCO, Qu Xing, offered some welcoming remarks on behalf of Director General Audrey Azoulay, who was representing the Secretary-General at the eleventh Summit of la Francophonie in Yerevan.

3. The agenda of the session was focused on the following themes, all linked to reform efforts across the United Nations system:

(a) Integrating business innovation;

(b) Driving change in business operations, especially in the field;

(c) Strengthening the system's capacity for data collection, analysis and protection;

(d) Addressing sexual harassment;

(e) Advancing the duty of care.

4. A complete list of participants is provided in annex I, and a checklist of documents can be found in annex II. All documents related to the session are available on the CEB website.

II. Retreat on integrating and mainstreaming business innovation within and across United Nations system organizations

5. In introducing the Committee's retreat on integrating and mainstreaming business innovation within and across United Nations system organizations, the Chair of the Committee highlighted the strategic importance for the United Nations system of adapting and taking advantage of new working methods and technologies in order to deliver on its mandates in a period of fast-paced change. Recalling the broad and direct mandate from CEB to the Committee to mainstream innovation in order to improve business practices and the Board's call for the United Nations system to systematically integrate and mainstream innovation within and across entities, the Chair emphasized the critical ongoing role of the Committee in supporting the realization of the CEB vision on innovation. The dedicated retreat session was aimed at taking advantage of the professional expertise and talent of the Committee to enable business innovation in a strategic and systematic way.

6. The first objective of the retreat session, which was held in two parts, was for the Committee to enable and foster innovation within management functions and throughout organizations by identifying a set of specific and scalable initiatives to be carried out as part of the priorities of the Committee in its strategic plan for the 2017–2020 period. The Committee was able to build on the groundwork laid by its networks, which have intensively discussed innovation in their respective fields. In an effort to harness innovative thinking from all levels, the Chair of the Committee welcomed representatives of the Young United Nations network to participate in the retreat session and to bring fresh perspectives to the Committee's deliberations.

7. The Committee engaged in a free exchange of ideas in subgroups and in the plenary on how to adopt and enable innovative initiatives in both the short and the longer term. A key point from the Committee's discussions was the emphasis on the need for senior management to lead by example by communicating articulately and frequently about the importance of changing organizational culture to enable innovation and by providing space for bottom-up idea generation. It was noted that the Committee had an enabling function to drive innovation in organizations and to support the overall United Nations system, and that engagement with staff and governing bodies was essential to fulfil that function. Committee members also pointed out that the time was ripe to move from the idea stage to implementation, through projectization, including clear timelines, and scaling up.

8. On the basis of its discussions and the ideas presented by the subgroups, the Committee went on to prioritize short- and longer-term innovation initiatives in various areas that it could concretely take forward in its strategic plan.

9. The Committee observed that leveraging new technologies was a vital part of bringing innovation to bear and specifically prioritized robotic process automation as an area of work. In particular, the initiative of a digital service centre garnered much support from Committee members. From a strategic, longer-term perspective, it was recognized that many United Nations entities have global service centres that provide a wide range of transactional processing services in human resources, finance, procurement, travel and information technology. The further consolidation of those centres across agencies and into networks of shared service centres was seen as an opportunity to use the most advanced technologies, such as robotic process automation and chatbots, to create one of those centres as a digital service centre that would automate non-location-specific back-office transactions in various business areas.

10. Similarly, the improvement of processes in innovative ways is being pursued in the areas of human resources and procurement. The Human Resources Network is piloting joint service delivery and collaboration in areas such as job classification and reference-checking through the United Nations Global Centre for Human Resources Services, also known as the "OneHR" service centre, in Bonn, Germany. The Centre offers a platform that can be further expanded by adding new layers of services, such as the Clear Check screening database for sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse. The Procurement Network is preparing a business case with actionable items and a road map towards cognitive procurement, that is, procurement aided by the autonomous capabilities of artificial intelligence and technologies, in relation to data mining, pattern recognition, predictive analytics and natural language processing, which can enhance all aspects of the procurement process and enable more informed decisions, reducing the need for transactional processes to be performed by people.

11. Making use of machine learning and artificial intelligence, in particular with regard to translation and document management, was recognized as another priority area for the Committee. United Nations system entities are already using machine translation based on neural networks and open-source components, as well as web-based translation tools. The Committee will continue to explore, build on and expand the implementation of translation solutions for the United Nations system, including WIPO Translate and eLUNa, to satisfy the demand for efficient multilingual services and content.

12. In the domain of document management, the Committee has strategically worked on a joint initiative involving 16 agencies of the United Nations system to develop a United Nations system common documentation standard, which resulted in the adoption by CEB of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework for

normative and parliamentary documents in 2017. On that basis, the second phase of the project is supporting the implementation of the framework across the United Nations system to launch a new era of information management. This objective is being pursued in a partnership with the European Parliament in order to leverage its considerable experience in the deployment of semantic technologies.

13. With regard to a suggestion from the Young United Nations network for senior management to consider giving staff dedicated time and space to pursue innovative activities, the Committee prioritized the creation of virtual, physical and event-based spaces for innovation as a critical overall objective to realize a cultural shift.

14. Concrete initiatives to create spaces for innovation included the establishment of innovation fairs and hubs. The Information and Communication Technology Network is planning such events in the near future, which will bring together staff and teams from across United Nations entities to raise awareness of initiatives being undertaken or to incentivize staff to innovate through competitions to find the best solution to a given challenge. A conference on the future of finance is being planned by the Finance and Budget Network for the community to learn from external experts on automation and technological opportunities within the global finance community, and to provide inspiration and identify opportunities for innovation in finance- and budget-related areas. The creation of a common app store for social good is another concrete initiative that could serve as a source of application solutions to administrative and programme-related issues for the United Nations system and provide staff with spaces for innovation.

15. Scalable hubs such as forums for innovation can also advance the longer-term objective of developing specific areas of expertise to support the work of the United Nations system in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. An example of this is the United Nations Technology Innovation Labs pilot in Finland, in which frontier technologies such as blockchain technology, artificial intelligence and the "Internet of things" are emphasized and which could, if successful, serve as a model for other locations.

16. During the Committee's deliberations, the importance of senior management leading by example was stressed, and it was noted that the leadership needed innovation skills and training to successfully support the development of a culture of innovation in United Nations entities. In the longer term, and not only for senior management, the United Nations System Staff College could develop learning solutions tailored to the needs of users with different levels of innovation experience. More broadly, the Committee recognized attracting and retaining talent as a priority area for innovation in human resources management in the United Nations system.

17. A "OneHR" talent platform emerged as a strategic objective to pursue in this area. Working towards more coordinated efforts in talent outreach and recruitment was seen as an area with great potential for innovation. While this will be a long-term goal given the technical complexities and necessary investments, concrete initial steps can be taken with initiatives such as joint system-wide online outreach activities in social networks. In another short-term initiative to help United Nations entities hire for innovation-focused roles, the Human Resources Network, in collaboration with the United Nations Innovation Network, is planning to compile a structured overview of job descriptions of staff and consultants in innovation functions. Similarly, the Finance and Budget Network will consider how traditional finance roles are changing as a result of innovative technology and automation and will look at pathways such as redefining tasks and staff profiles, retraining staff or examining alternative ways to gain access to the skills and capacity of innovation experts.

18. One step towards joint innovation in human resources is an initiative to expand the joint use of online instruments for candidate assessment by learning from the

European Personnel Selection Office about setting up joint assessment services to fast-track experience-building and foster the piloting of innovative, technology-driven assessment tools such as video interviewing, artificial intelligence tools in screening, e-tray exercises and game-based assessments.

19. To inform broader discussions on how to instil a culture of innovation in the United Nations system, the establishment of a staff engagement benchmarking service is envisaged. Such a clearing house to expand inter-agency benchmarks for staff engagement and other survey results will provide more granular benchmarks and allow system-wide, specific, data-driven analysis of cultural issues.

20. The second part of the retreat session was dedicated to supporting the development of the United Nations innovation toolkit. At its first regular session in 2018, CEB had requested "the development of an actionable toolkit under the leadership of the United Nations Innovation Network that would provide leading practices and guidance for United Nations entities on how to foster and scale innovation across the United Nations system."

21. The Co-Chairs of the United Nations Innovation Network provided an overview of the toolkit, which will consist of five core modules — strategy, architecture, partnerships, culture and evaluation — with each module containing a set of actionable resources and tools. Exploring opportunities to innovate in business functions, identifying ways to enable innovation within the United Nations system and sharing resources, tools and approaches were underscored as critical roles of the Committee in promoting innovation. The Committee was therefore chosen as the first audience to review, test and assess parts of the toolkit that were under development and were presented to CEB at its second regular session in 2018.

22. External innovation experts led the Committee through the testing of a diagnostic tool that serves to assess the maturity of an individual organization across the five core modules through a series of questions and then presented a sample tool from the toolkit. The Committee was asked to provide feedback on the design, user experience and relevance of the content. In an interactive, moderated discussion, Committee members shared their comments with the authors of the toolkit.

23. Several Committee members observed that the toolkit could be a helpful instrument to engage in innovation in a structured manner but cautioned that it could only be part of a much larger effort to successfully enable innovation in the United Nations system, for which an overall cultural shift was needed.

24. Committee members noted that the results of assessing the innovation maturity of an organization would vary depending on the respondent within the organization. In particular, it was recognized that results would diverge for respondents at different hierarchical levels of the organization, at field or headquarters duty stations and in different functions. It was also observed that the results could be presented in more detail in a maturity model and across the different modules of the toolkit.

25. In further comments, it was mentioned that the toolkit in its present form seemed to have been designed for organizations with an existing innovation structure and could include more references to innovation across the United Nations system. While some members pointed out differences in approaches and needs among United Nations organizations compared with private sector organizations, others mentioned the importance of looking across sectors for experience and examples.

26. The authors of the toolkit appreciated the feedback from the Committee and looked forward to refining and updating it on the basis of the feedback received.

27. The Vice-Chair of the Committee observed the practical and tangible approach to innovation adopted by members during the retreat session and highlighted that the

Committee was moving towards "doing things differently and doing different things" by taking explicit action to innovate in all business areas and by enabling innovation across organizations, thereby also advancing cultural change.

28. The Vice-Chair requested the CEB secretariat to appropriately reflect the fostering of innovation in the strategic plan of the Committee for the 2017–2020 period. The areas of work to be covered in the strategic plan would include robotic process automation and common service centres, machine learning and artificial intelligence for translation and document management, the creation of spaces to innovate and innovation in human resources management.

29. The urgency of involving young people in all aspects of the work of the United Nations was stressed. The Vice-Chair thanked the representatives of the Young United Nations network for their participation and valuable contributions to the session and looked forward to future engagement with its network of young staff members. The United Nations Innovation Network and the innovation experts were thanked for facilitating the session, which stimulated creative thinking.

Decisions

30. **The Committee affirmed its commitment to taking forward and bringing to bear the CEB vision on innovation within and across United Nations system entities.**

31. **The Committee embraced the fostering of innovation throughout its strategic plan, building on specific, scalable initiatives identified in the course of its deliberations during the retreat and focusing on the following areas: robotic process automation and common service centres; machine learning and artificial intelligence, in particular with regard to translation and document management; the creation of virtual, physical and event-based spaces for innovation; and innovation in human resources management.**

32. **The Committee also contributed to the development of the United Nations innovation toolkit, including by testing and assessing its diagnostic tool and giving feedback on the design and utility of the toolkit's architecture.**

III. Driving change in business operations

33. The Committee Vice-Chair introduced this item and noted that the United Nations system is pursuing radical change in the way it runs its operations and in the way management functions can support a repositioned United Nations development system. Individually and collectively, organizations must manage this change and make management functions a transformational force to drive improved programme delivery and coherent United Nations system responses.

34. The Secretary-General indicated the way forward in his December 2017 report on repositioning the United Nations development system (A/72/684-E/2018/7), and the General Assembly endorsed his proposals to do the following:

(a) Advance common business operations in United Nations country teams;

(b) Accelerate efforts to operate according to the principle of mutual recognition of policies and procedures;

(c) Devise a strategy and launch pilots for the establishment of common back offices for all United Nations country teams.

35. Most recently, the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing

inter-agency cooperation (JIU/REP/2018/5) also contained a number of draft recommendations for consolidated country-level administrative support arrangements.

36. The Vice-Chair acknowledged the maturity of the Committee's discussion on the consolidation of service delivery, thanks to the discussions that had started in Budapest and continued in Geneva and in Valencia, Spain.

37. The following building blocks were highlighted by the Committee in the new business operations of the United Nations system:

(a) Strengthened accountability and transparency for system-wide results;

(b) Greater incentives for integrated action;

(c) Frameworks for the delegation of authority and accountability for the United Nations country teams to deliver and report on country results at a scale that responds to national needs and national priorities.

38. In concluding her introductory remarks, the Vice-Chair noted that the Committee had a key role to play in promoting those approaches and sharing best practices, building on the achievements of the previous few years. The policies and platforms designed and put in place by the Committee in the areas of procurement, banking, treasury and human resources represented models for joint and more efficient service provision and had fundamentally changed how the United Nations, as a common system, could effectively adopt collaborative approaches.

39. The subsequent discussion included a presentation by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Reform, Jens Wandel, who spoke about the linkages across reform streams and about business operations as instrumental in realizing the objectives of the Secretary-General's reforms. In addition, Robert Turner from the Business Innovations Group presented the scope of the Group's work and its principles, purpose and deliverables and emphasized how the repositioning of the United Nations development system also reinforces the impact of concurrent reforms of internal management and of the peace and security architecture.

40. The Committee acknowledged the need to be ambitious, to build on the momentum for reform that the Secretary-General had created and to accelerate delivery during the limited time in which the window of opportunity would remain open.

41. Members underlined the important role that the Committee must play in supporting the design of the policy framework that must accompany the implementation of the country-level pilot projects requested by the Secretary-General.

42. The Committee noted that a repositioned United Nations development system, with a redesigned and reinvigorated resident coordinator system, required a recalibration of functions and relationships not only at the country level, but also in regions and at headquarters duty stations. The Committee could support this process by acting as a catalytic change agent, working towards integrated approaches that hinged on strong policy and accountability frameworks and that ensured that ethics and standards are consistently upheld across the increasingly decentralized United Nations institutions and system — ambitious expectations, but necessary for the business transformation that is required.

Decisions

43. **The Committee renewed its strong commitment to advancing global and country-level change in business operations and to guiding the change process in a coordinated manner across all reform streams.**

44. **The Committee agreed to promote, together with the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the mainstreaming of mutual recognition of policies and procedures across the entire United Nations system.**

45. **The Committee confirmed its commitment to strengthening coordination with the Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to ensure full engagement by the Committee networks in the provision of policy guidance for the design and implementation of common back-office pilots for United Nations country teams.**

IV. Risk management

46. At its thirty-fifth session, the Committee agreed on the need for joint, cross-functional engagement towards the system-wide harmonization of risk management practices, including sharing information on fraudulent behaviour by implementing partners, assessments of risk appetite and risk tolerance, incorporating the acceptance of residual risk into organizational policies, implementing smarter upstream controls, examining the cost of controls compared with the value of the potential loss that they are intended to mitigate, and developing common definitions of risk categories to enable a common approach to reporting risks.

47. The Committee considered the proposed terms of reference for a cross-functional task force on risk management that will be jointly led by the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Food Programme. The Committee agreed that there would be great value in having a consistent risk management framework across the United Nations system, while recognizing that a "one size fits all" approach would not be appropriate. The first phase of the work of the task force will involve defining a multiple-stage maturity model that exhibits the characteristics and features of organizations in each of the defined stages of organizational risk management maturity and that will allow organizations to benchmark and serve as an implementation guide in creating a roadmap. After completion of this deliverable, subsequent phases will be planned for the work of the task force, including pragmatic guidance for organizations intending to enhance their existing risk management framework and the establishment of a forum that permits organizations to effectively exchange views and gain access to best practices in risk management.

Decisions

48. **The Committee approved the terms of reference for the new cross-functional task force on risk management, launching the development of a system-wide risk management reference model to serve as a benchmarking tool and an implementation guide to advance risk management in United Nations organizations, in particular in the context of the greater delegation of authority.**

49. **The Committee requested the cross-functional task force to start its work and report on progress at the first session of the Committee in 2019.**

V. United Nations system data cube

50. The ad hoc team on the future data cube of the United Nations is a joint initiative of the Committee and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. The team was established in recognition of the new demands faced by the United Nations system in terms of its system-wide financial information, in an effort to move away from a financial data structure that had historically been mapped on the basis of data categories and data-compilation approaches developed prior to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. The team Co-Chair, Henriette Keijzers of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, informed the Committee that the first phase of the initiative had been completed, including mapping existing financial data and reporting approaches, identifying gaps and formulating six data standards for reporting United Nations system-wide financial information.

51. The discussion also benefited from a presentation from Kersten Jauer of the Strategic Planning and Monitoring Unit of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, who provided some perspectives on United Nations system funding, spending and results in the aggregate and touched on the data challenges that will be addressed with the new standards.

52. The Committee noted the critical importance of United Nations data standards to enable the reporting of financial flows towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by individual organizations and collectively as a system, and in improving the consistency and credibility of United Nations system financial reporting by function and geographical location. The alignment of the new data standards with those of the Development Assistance Committee and of the International Aid Transparency Initiative was also noted with appreciation.

Decisions

53. **The Committee welcomed and approved six new United Nations data standards, as presented in document CEB/2018/HLCM/16, to enable the reporting of financial flows relating to the Sustainable Development Goals by individual organizations and by the system as a whole, noting that the new standards will be a valuable tool for informed decision-making at all managerial levels. The following standards will take effect on 1 January 2019, in some cases with a transitional period:**

(a) **The United Nations entity standard prescribes which United Nations entities should report their financial data in future system-wide data collection exercises, including the annual CEB collection of financial statistics;**

(b) **The United Nations system function standard provides definitions of functions carried out by United Nations system entities to facilitate consistent reporting by entities of expenses against the four main functional areas of the United Nations;**

(c) **The geographical location standard defines the geographical locations (global, regions and countries) for which financial information should be reported and includes guidance on the allocation of expenses to those locations;**

(d) **The United Nations financing instruments standard provides definitions of grant instruments and the various modalities by which funds are received by United Nations system entities;**

(e) **The Sustainable Development Goals standard introduces a common United Nations methodology and format for tracking the contribution of activities to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and defines the**

manner in which financial information should be reported against the 17 Goals and the 169 targets;

(f) The contributor data standard provides guidance on reporting revenue by contributor.

54. **The Committee endorsed the proposed timeline for the development of a multi-year road map for the implementation of the standards and for moving the United Nations system towards a more encompassing and disaggregated system-wide data cube that is compatible with the Sustainable Development Goals.**

VI. Addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system

55. At its second regular session in 2017, CEB established, under the leadership of the Chair of the Committee, a task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system. The task force identified the harmonization of sexual harassment policies, improvements in sexual harassment reporting and data collection and enhanced awareness-raising, outreach and communication as priority areas for action and agreed on a set of concrete deliverables to address the issue with urgency and enthusiasm.

56. At the first regular session of CEB in 2018, the Secretary-General and the Executive Heads reiterated their firm commitment to upholding a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, strengthening victim-centred prevention and response efforts and fostering a safe and inclusive working environment. On the recommendation of the Committee, CEB endorsed the outcomes of the first phase of the work of the task force and requested it to accelerate its efforts and deliver on the priority areas identified.

57. Building on the first phase of its work, the task force prepared and delivered a set of additional measures, which were reviewed and adopted at the task force meeting on 1 October 2018 (see CEB/2018/HLCM/14).

58. The Committee was briefed by its Chair, in her capacity as Chair of the task force, and was invited to approve, on behalf of CEB, the measures and recommendations proposed.

59. The Committee noted the work of the task force as an exemplary demonstration of system-wide collaboration and expressed deep appreciation for the accelerated pace with which the task force had delivered high-quality products and tools of great utility and value for the entire United Nations system to address a complex challenge in a coherent and coordinated manner.

60. Reflecting on experiences and challenges in dealing with sexual harassment in individual institutional contexts in response to the progress report of the task force, the Committee shared the following observations:

(a) Addressing sexual harassment effectively in the workplace requires a change in organizational culture and consistent and sustained attention to the issue by senior leadership;

(b) Regarding the United Nations system model policy on sexual harassment, the Committee expressed its appreciation to the task force for having conducted an inclusive consultation process that facilitated substantive inputs from a wide range of stakeholders. The provisions of the model policy for third-party complaints, its strong protection against retaliation and the possibility of an informal process for conflict resolution were valued in particular. Several members stated that they were already

in the process of adapting their own policy documents to align them with the model policy;

(c) With regard to the expanded guidelines for the sexual harassment screening database, the Committee supported the inclusion of pending allegations of sexual harassment, with many members stating that they had already opted to apply the expanded provisions within their respective legal and operational frameworks. A proposal was made to consider expanding the database to other types of misconduct, including fraud;

(d) Concerning the draft model code of conduct, many members considered it a useful and urgently needed tool for communicating the standards of expected conduct to all attendees at United Nations events and supported the holding of informal consultations with Member States on the draft prior to finalizing the model code of conduct;

(e) The Committee expressed broad support for continuing efforts towards a harmonized mechanism for the system-wide collection and analysis of data as an important tool for systematic reporting, possibly on an annual basis, and evidence-based policymaking. In this context, some members emphasized the need for consistency and harmonization in reporting by United Nations entities;

(f) Concerning helplines and hotlines, a common approach developed on the basis of best practices was widely regarded as valuable;

(g) Among the issues identified that deserve further system-wide attention was the strengthening of investigative capacity, including greater consolidation of resources among United Nations investigative services and improved sharing of expertise among United Nations system entities. The Committee agreed that this issue needed to be addressed by a dedicated subgroup in the next phase of the work of the task force, in cooperation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Post-War and Disaster Reconstruction and Rehabilitation and the United Nations Representatives of Investigations Services. The issue of the burden of proof was raised, and the need for guidance on communication protocols during investigations was noted by the Committee.

61. Finally, the Chair thanked the Committee for its commitment and support throughout the process. In the next phase of its work, the task force would focus its efforts on implementing the agreed joint actions, strengthening investigative capacity and expanding its communication activities and tools. The task force would also bring the outcome of its work to the attention of the Committee at its thirty-seventh session.

Decisions

62. **The Committee approved, on behalf of CEB, the measures and recommendations put forward by the task force in its progress report (CEB/2018/HLCM/14 and CEB/2018/HLCM/14/Add.1). Specifically, the Committee:**

(a) Adopted the United Nations system model policy on sexual harassment and recommended a periodic review of its terms at least every three years;

(b) Adopted the expanded guidelines on the sexual harassment screening database to include pending allegations of sexual harassment and encouraged all United Nations system entities to opt in and deploy the expanded provisions;

(c) Adopted, as a draft, the model code of conduct to prevent sexual harassment during or in relation to United Nations events and its implementation guide, pending finalization within the task force and informal consultations with Member States leading to final adoption;

(d) Noted the indicative data from the system-wide questionnaire on improved reporting on sexual harassment in the United Nations system and committed to a systematic and harmonized approach to reporting;

(e) Noted the planned efforts to develop a framework for the various hotline and helpline solutions, with reference to best practices, and encouraged the development of joint mechanisms;

(f) Committed to continuing its efforts to strengthen the investigative capacity of the United Nations system in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the United Nations Representatives of Investigations Services and invited organizations to engage in the task force subgroup on strengthening investigative capacity.

VII. Duty of care for United Nations system personnel

63. In introducing this agenda item, the Chair of the Committee noted the strong and continued commitment of the Secretary-General with regard to duty of care for United Nations personnel in all environments where the United Nations is present, and the priority placed by the Committee on enacting reforms to strengthen the capacity of the Organization to meet that goal while carrying out the mandates enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

64. The Chair also stated that, on the occasion of the presentation of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy at the September 2018 meeting of the United Nations Senior Management Group, the Secretary-General had highlighted his personal interest in the mental health and well-being of staff. He had also stressed the need for all members of the Senior Management Group to increase their attention to this crucial element of duty of care and emphasized the multidisciplinary nature of the discussions.

65. In this context, the UN Cares programme was referred to as a model that could be used for this purpose, with the proposal of an expansion of its mandate to cover mental health. It was agreed that this option could be reviewed by the Committee in the context of the duty of care.

66. The Committee then received a progress update from the Co-Chair of the cross-functional task force on duty of care, led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), on the implementation status of measures and tools agreed at the thirty-fifth session of the Committee.

67. In alignment with its new terms of reference, the task force, while not losing focus on high-risk environments, was now moving on to developing duty of care measures in all environments and for all types of personnel. In doing so, the task force joined the Secretary-General in his strong advocacy for equitable and commensurate treatment of all personnel, including national staff and affiliate personnel, and in recognizing the valuable and critical contributions they make globally.

68. Several achievements were highlighted, including the following:

(a) Duty station health risk assessments have now been piloted in 30 locations (17 countries), of which 4 are in high-risk duty stations (Central African Republic, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen). A prioritization methodology is being developed to concentrate on high-risk duty stations with the largest numbers of United Nations staff. A self-reporting tool will also be developed to enable country teams to undertake their own assessments, using the assessment of the six mandatory health support elements;

(b) Several organizations are currently revising their policies on medical evacuation to extend the applicability of non-emergency medical evacuation to both international and locally recruited staff members and their eligible family members;

(c) Following its endorsement by the Committee in April 2018, a standard operating procedure for establishing regional areas of care has been developed. The procedure will help to support locally recruited staff and their families in gaining access to essential medical services and further enhance the organizations' ability to have a standardized methodology to approve regional areas of care in areas where needs for medical services are inadequately addressed in the local environment;

(d) The implementation of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy has been launched, and its cross-functional implementation board will devise a concrete roll-out plan during a kick-off workshop in October 2018. A number of organizations have already started implementing priority actions under the Strategy.

69. A dedicated task force workshop in December 2018 will serve to specify how the extension to all environments and to all personnel can be planned and accelerated.

70. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management then presented a proposal for a repurposed UN Cares programme that could support implementation of priorities under the umbrella of duty of care and contribute to the strengthening of system-wide efforts to improve staff psychological welfare in line with the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and with system-wide efforts to address harassment in the workplace.

71. In the subsequent discussion, the Committee members indicated their continuing commitment to strengthening organizational capacity to enhance the well-being of personnel. Some members indicated their support for a repurposed UN Cares as part of efforts to implement the Mental Health Strategy, with a focus on stigma reduction and peer support among staff. A number of other members indicated the need to further develop the proposal for a repurposed UN Cares programme, taking into consideration the advice of relevant professional communities in human resources management, staff counselling and medical services.

Decisions

72. **The Committee expressed its appreciation to the cross-functional task force on the duty of care for having adjusted its scope to cover all staff, beyond high-risk environments, and for the special attention given to national staff and to psychosocial welfare.**

73. **The Committee also expressed support for the objective of the task force of going beyond the minimum, reflecting the responsibility of the United Nations system to pursue duty of care for its workforce, irrespective of contractual status.**

74. **The Committee adopted the progress report of the task force and thanked UNHCR and UNICEF for their leadership in this strategic undertaking.**

75. **The Committee encouraged the task force to continue its work and requested an update at the next Committee session on the implementation status of the action points endorsed by the Committee at its session in April 2018 and included in the monitoring and evaluation framework presented in the progress report.**

76. **The Committee endorsed the aim of the task force to establish the parameters, such as minimum standards and guiding principles, for the United Nations on its duty of care responsibilities for all United Nations personnel,**

regardless of contractual status or location, while taking into account the occupational safety and health framework approved by the Committee.

77. **The Committee requested the task force to deliver a framework for the duty of care in all environments and for non-staff personnel at the second session of the Committee in 2019.**

78. **The Committee requested the Co-Chairs of the task force on duty of care, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, to develop a revised and detailed proposal for a repurposing of the UN Cares programme on the basis of the views expressed during the session and input from the mental health and well-being implementation board, with a view to preparing the virtual endorsement of the proposal by the end of 2018.**

IX. Other business

A. Personal data protection and privacy principles

79. The United Nations inter-agency privacy policy group, organized by the United Nations Global Pulse team and by the United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology, developed and unanimously endorsed a set of personal data protection and privacy principles for organizations of the United Nations system.

80. The Chair of the Committee noted that the personal data protection and privacy principles were designed to: (a) harmonize standards for the protection of personal data across United Nations system organizations; (b) facilitate the accountable processing of personal data for the purpose of implementing the mandates of the United Nations system organizations; and (c) ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals, in particular the right to privacy.

81. The Chair also noted that the principles and their subsequent elaboration into appropriate policies for each organization would greatly facilitate the ongoing discussions that the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel is conducting, on behalf of the Legal Network, with the European Union concerning its General Data Protection Regulation.

82. The adoption of the principles as a minimum common position by the United Nations system would send a strong signal to the European Union, as well as to other parties (including Governments of Member States, vendors and implementing partners), showing that the United Nations system is keeping abreast of current developments in personal data protection at the international level and is enhancing and modernizing its regulatory framework as necessary and in a manner consistent with the status, privileges and immunities of United Nations system organizations.

Decisions

83. **The Committee approved the personal data protection and privacy principles for United Nations system organizations as a first step towards ensuring that there is a common framework for providing high-level protection of the right to privacy, including that of personal data, for persons working for, associated with or under the care of the United Nations system.**

84. **The Committee noted that the personal data protection and privacy principles represented a common position that constituted the minimum standard of protection across the United Nations system and that they would be further elaborated and enhanced according to the particular needs and respective mandates of each of the United Nations system organizations.**

B. Internship programmes in the United Nations system

85. The Chair of the Committee brought to the attention of the Committee members the views and comments of the Fair Internship Initiative on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system" (A/73/377 and A/73/377/Corr.1) and the related note by the Secretary-General (A/73/377/Add.1).

86. While awaiting the outcome of the deliberations of Member States on the issue, in order to properly inform potential steps by the United Nations system, the Chair proposed the launch of an informal review group on establishing best practices in United Nations system internship programmes, whose initial findings could be presented at the first session of the Committee in 2019.

87. The proposal was well received by member organizations, some of which indicated their interest in participating in the review.

Decision

88. **The Committee decided to launch an informal inter-agency review group to consider all aspects related to internship programmes in the United Nations. The group's initial findings will be presented at the first session of the Committee in 2019.**

C. Dates and venue for the next session of the Committee

89. The Chair informed the Committee that she had received and accepted a kind offer from United Nations Volunteers to host the thirty-seventh session of the Committee in Bonn, Germany, on 3 and 4 April 2019.

Annex I

High-level Committee on Management, thirty-sixth session

List of participants

Chair:

Jan Beagle, Under-Secretary-General for Management of the United Nations Secretariat

Vice-Chair:

Kelly Clements, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees

Secretary:

Remo Lalli, Chief, Geneva Office of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Simona Petrova, Director, secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Organization	*Participant*
United Nations	Jan Beagle, Under-Secretary-General for Management
	Jens Wandel, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Reform
	Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management
	Atefeh Riazi, Assistant Secretary-General, Chief Information Technology Officer
	Lisa Buttenheim, Assistant Secretary-General for Field Support
	Arnab Roy, Director of Office/Management Reform, Executive Office of the Secretary-General
	Jay Pozenel, Director, General Legal Division, Office of Legal Affairs
	Igor Shpiniov, Chief of Office, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
International Labour Organization	Greg Vines, Deputy Director-General
	Mark Levin, Director, Human Resources Development Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Dilek Macit, Assistant Director General, Corporate Services Department
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Qu Xing, Deputy Director General

Organization	*Participant*
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	Gunilla Carlsson, Deputy Executive Director, Management and Governance
World Health Organization	Jane Ellison, Deputy Director General for Corporate Operations
	Roberto Balsamo, Management Officer
Universal Postal Union	Pascal Clivaz, Deputy Director General
International Organization for Migration	Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General
	Carlos Oliver Cruz, Special Assistant to the Deputy Director General
International Telecommunication Union	Anders Norsker, Chief, Information Services
International Meteorology Organization	Linda Ryan, Director, Administrative Division
World Intellectual Property Organization	Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General, Administration and Management Sector
	Chitra Narayanaswamy, Director, Programme Planning and Finance (Controller)
	Cornelia Moussa, Director, Human Resources Management Department
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Guoqi Wu, Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department
	Daniela Junqueira, Senior Operations Adviser
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Fatou Haidara, Managing Director, Directorate of Corporate Management and Operations
International Atomic Energy Agency	Mary Alice Hayward, Deputy Director General and Head, Department of Management
United Nations Development Programme	Susan McDade, Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Management Services
	Henriette Keijzers, Deputy Executive Coordinator, Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
United Nations Environment Programme	Tim Kasten, Deputy Director, Economy Division
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Kelly Clements, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees
	Hans Baritt, Controller and Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management
United Nations Children's Fund	Fatoumata Ndiaye, Deputy Executive Director, Management

Organization	*Participant*
	Miles Hastie, Administrative Law Specialist
	Lori Issa, Executive Manager
United Nations Population Fund	Laura Londén, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director (Management)
	Andrew Saberton, Director, Division for Management Services
World Food Programme	Manoj Juneja, Assistant Executive Director for Resource Management and Chief Financial Officer
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Dennis Thatchaichawalit, Director, Division for Management
United Nations Office for Project Services	Patricia Moser, Director, Procurement Group
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	Moez Doraid, Director, Division of Management and Administration
World Bank	Jos Verbeek, Manager and Special Representative to the United Nations and the World Trade Organization
	Ferran Pérez, International Affairs Officer
Other representatives:	
United Nations System Staff College	Jafar Javan, Director
International Criminal Court	Ivan Alippi, Director, Division of Management Services
United Nations Volunteers programme	Olivier Adam, Executive Coordinator
Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Patrick Grenard, Director, Division of Administration
Finance and Budget Network	Nick Jeffreys, Co-Chair
World Trade Organization	Christian Dahoui, Director, Human Resources Division
United Nations Innovation Network	Robert Opp, Co-Chair
	Chris Fabian, Co-Chair
	Johanna Jochim, Manager
Young United Nations network	Klas Moldeus, Associate Expert, UN-Water

Organization	*Participant*
	Ruth Blackshaw, Executive Officer, UNAIDS
United Nations Sustainable Development Group	Anders Voigt, Business Operations Adviser, Development Operations Coordination Office
	Robert Turner, Project Team Leader, Business Innovations Group
International Civil Service Commission	Aldo Mantovani, Vice-Chair
	Regina Pawlik, Executive Secretary
Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations	Brett Fitzgerald, President
	Elia Matias, President, UNESCO Staff Union
Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System	Fraser Mcilwraith, Vice-President for Conditions of Service
United Nations International Civil Servants Federation	Dimitri Samaras, President
	Fikerte Assefa, Second Vice-Chair
United Nations International Civil Servants Federation observers	Kadidia Diallo, Vice-President
	Ryad Bouhadef, Executive Secretary

Annex II

High-level Committee on Management, thirty-sixth session

Checklist of documents

	Title description	*Summary sheet*	*Document symbol*
	Provisional agenda	Not available	CEB/2018/HLCM/9/Rev.2
	Revised provisional programme of work		CEB/2018/HLCM/9/Add.1/Rev.2
RETREAT	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) summary of deliberations at the first regular session in 2018 (excerpts), segment 3: Fostering innovation in the United Nations system	Yes	CEB/2018/1-Excerpt
	Concept note for the innovation retreat		CEB/2018/HLCM/18
	Compendium of proposals on integrating and mainstreaming business innovation in United Nations system organizations		CEB/2018/HLCM/11
A	Briefing note by the Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group	Yes	CEB/2018/HLCM/13
	Progress report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system	Yes	CEB/2018/HLCM/14
B	Annexes 1 to 7 to the progress report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations System		CEB/2018/HLCM/14/Add.1
	Enabling environment guidelines for the United Nations system (*not for printing*)		CEB/2018/HLCM/14/INF.1
C.I	Draft terms of reference for the cross-functional task force on risk management	Yes	CEB/2018/HLCM/15
C.II	Progress report of the ad hoc United Nations team on the future United Nations data cube	Yes	CEB/2018/HLCM/16
	Progress report of the task force on duty of care		CEB/2018/HLCM/17
C.III	Annexes 2 to 5 to the progress report of the task force on duty of care	Yes	CEB/2018/HLCM/17/Ann.2-5
	UN Cares: future repositioning		CEB/2018/HLCM/17/Add.1

	Title description	*Summary sheet*	*Document symbol*
	Personal data protection and privacy principles for United Nations system organizations	Yes	CEB/2018/HLCM/19
AOB	**Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of internship programmes in the United Nations system and related note by the Secretary-General**	Not available	A/73/377, A/73/377/Corr.1 and A/73/377/Add.1
	Comments of the Fair Internship Initiative on the note by the Secretary-General		Not available
	Final report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network on its twenty-eighth session, June 2018 (*not for printing*)	Yes	Not available
	United Nations security management system security policy manual (*not for printing*)		
	• Chapter IV: Security management, section B: Security planning		
	• Chapter IV: Security management, section C: Security of locally recruited personnel		Not available
	• Chapter V: Compliance with security policies and procedures, section D: Compliance, evaluation and best practices		
	• Security management operations manual: guidelines on security plans		

Chief Executives Board for Coordination

26 November 2018

English only

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-sixth session

(Headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome, 9 and 10 October 2018)

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirty-sixth session at the headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in Rome, on 9 and 10 October 2018. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II.

2. In welcoming the Committee, the Vice-President of IFAD, Cornelia Richter, expressed special appreciation for the efforts of the Committee to leverage the transformative power of technological innovation in support of realizing sustainable development for all. She pointed out that for all of the opportunities technologies offered, numerous challenges and open questions concerning their socioeconomic implications remained. Ms. Richter underscored that this demanded frank dialogue from diverse points of view on a wide range of policy issues. In this regard, she considered as essential the Committee's work in pursuing a coordinated system-wide approach that was rights based, people centred and participatory and that paid due regard to ensuring that no one was left behind, including by closing the gap between rural and urban opportunities.

3. In outlining the agenda for the thirty-sixth session, the Chair of the Committee, Guy Ryder, Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), recalled that CEB, in deliberating on the impact of disruptive technologies at its first regular session of 2018, had emphasized that technological advancement was interlinked with other global trends, such as growing inequality, demographic changes and governance challenges; a holistic, long-term vision for a future heavily influenced by technologies and other developments was thus needed; the risk of widening inequality across and within countries had to be mitigated and the digital divide closed; and the United Nations system had an important role to play in promoting an inclusive, equitable and human rights-based approach to addressing transformative changes. The Board had further stressed that any strategy aimed at addressing the implications of new technologies had to be focused on investing in people, especially young people, and on supporting developing countries in adapting to the new realities.

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4. At its current session, the Committee would advance efforts to pursue whole-system engagement on the implications of frontier technologies in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; promote universal norms and shared values to guide the United Nations system's efforts in an era of transformative change; and, to that end, carry out additional deep-dive analyses to further build system-wide knowledge on and capacity in key "frontier" issues. The Chair further noted that those efforts by the Committee were contributing to the Secretary-General's recently launched strategy on new technologies by helping to strengthen the United Nations system's internal knowledge and capacity. An exploratory discussion on strategic foresight and "futures thinking" would also stimulate the Committee's consideration of new ways of supporting the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the Committee would contribute a discussion paper in support of the Board's upcoming deliberations on drug policy.

II. Building system-wide knowledge and capacity through "deep-dive" analyses

Impact of frontier technologies on developing countries

5. The Chair recalled the guidance of CEB in which it emphasized the need for the United Nations system to ensure that developing countries, especially the least developed and the most vulnerable among them, were not further disadvantaged in an era of rapid and disruptive technological advancement. Further to the decision taken at its thirty-fifth session and on the basis of the analysis contributed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Committee engaged in an in-depth examination of the impact of new technologies on developing countries as an overarching and cross-cutting "thought input" to its ongoing "frontier issues" workstreams. The purpose was to inject them with the unique perspectives and requirements of developing countries, especially the population in the "bottom billion", as a necessary compass, informing and orienting system-wide approaches being developed under those workstreams.

6. Paul Akiwumi (UNCTAD) presented the analytical paper, underscoring that new technologies: (a) offered unprecedented opportunities to address social, economic and environmental challenges faced by developing countries; (b) opened great opportunities for developing countries to leapfrog — bypassing stages of technology during the development process — and to improve the efficiency of development interventions; (c) could, however, pose serious challenges in terms of jobs, inequality and ethical concerns; and (d) risked widening inequality within and between countries and leaving the poorest and most vulnerable further behind. To seize the opportunities and address the risks, it was essential to support developing countries in pursuing policies that would build digital infrastructure and skills and promote innovation. The paper recommended areas that, from the perspective of developing countries, required greater emphasis in the Committee's ongoing workstreams, as well as issues that could merit deeper examination by the Committee in the future. Finally, the Committee was encouraged to engage more actively in supporting the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as a key forum in which to address the development dimension of science, technology and innovation.

7. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed appreciation for the high quality of the analysis and its strong relevance to the Committee's ongoing work. Members recognized the opportunities for new technologies to offer solutions to challenges faced by the bottom billion, and urged the Committee, in its ongoing work on artificial intelligence capacity-building, to focus on that aspect. Members also strongly supported the recommendation to prioritize innovative solutions to problems

that are the most relevant to developing countries, especially the poorest among them, for example the use of technology to incentivize youth engagement in agriculture. At the same time, members echoed the concern raised in the paper about the serious risk of deepening inequality within and between countries and stressed the need to better understand the linkage between disruptive technologies and inequality, with social justice and protection as the connecting perspective. In this regard, active advocacy by the United Nations system against widening inequality was considered necessary. Risks related to biotechnology and genetic editing were also highlighted as a critical issue in need of closer examination.

8. The Committee supported the need for further reflection on the issue of governance and on how the application of new technologies could be promoted in support of the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level, particularly as a new generation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks was being pursued. There was a convergence of views on the need to support the capacity for research, development and the sharing of data and to enable developing countries to determine their needs. Some members underscored the importance of the Committee's efforts at the global and policy levels aiming for and resulting in concrete action and impact on the ground. In this regard, members stressed the importance of channelling the Committee's analysis into operational efforts through, inter alia, the sharing of best practices across the system and enhanced engagement with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the science, technology and innovation forum to contribute to country-level assessments.

9. In the area of data governance and norms, members voiced ethical and human rights concerns linked to data control and sovereignty. In that regard, they discussed a role that the United Nations system could play to foster local-level capacity development that would enable developing countries to forge appropriate national policies while more effectively participating in global-level rule-setting. Members also discussed the importance of data quality-assurance frameworks to account for such issues as transparency, representativeness and inclusiveness, as well as the need to deepen the analysis around data sovereignty, building on the Board's work on big data in 2015. Furthermore, concern was expressed that the dependence on platforms controlled by a small number of countries and firms would undermine the ability of governments to have full control over data, particularly biodata, resulting in the loosening of protections for their citizens.

10. Bearing in mind the uncertainty over the traditional export-led development pathway, members expressed the view that the United Nations system's approach to globalization, more broadly, needed to be considered. Members called for collective efforts to apply course-correction measures aimed at ending seclusion and reorienting globalization, while also including human mobility in the new equation. A "foresight approach" was mentioned as potentially being a useful in that regard.

11. Harnessing the expertise available in academia and the private sector, as well as traditional knowledge, was underscored as being crucial, and the importance of ensuring a coherent United Nations system approach to the private sector was noted. Furthermore, the need for investing in social innovation, incentivizing the shift of new technologies to more inclusive development and in that regard prioritizing innovative technologies that were focused on such vulnerable groups as children and youth, persons with disabilities, women, refugees and migrants, was also stressed.

Conclusion

12. **The Committee supported the analysis and recommendations set out in the paper and requested that they be duly integrated into each ongoing workstream, providing an overarching guiding perspective. The Committee also requested**

that its secretariat take the discussion into account in planning the Committee's future analytical work.

III. Promoting system-wide action on frontier challenges in support of the Sustainable Development Goals

Artificial intelligence: capacity development for developing countries

13. In introducing the agenda item, the Chair recalled that Committee, in its previous discussions, had recognized the transformative power of artificial intelligence to promote a range of development benefits and serve as a force for good, while also acknowledging its potential to disrupt societies and pose serious ethical and human rights challenges. He further recalled that Committee had agreed to pursue United Nations system-wide engagement, through a three-step approach, to scale up capacity-building support for developing countries to help them harness the potential of artificial intelligence and mitigate its risks in support of sustainable development. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) had been requested to lead a consultative process among Committee members to develop such a system-wide approach.

14. Preetam Maloor (ITU) presented the draft United Nations system-wide strategic approach and road map for supporting capacity development on artificial intelligence for the Committee's consideration, prepared in consultation with interested United Nations agencies, with input from Harvard University's Berkman Klein Centre for Internet and Society. Building on the Committee's earlier guidance, the draft elaborated on the guiding principles on artificial intelligence capacity-building and a framework of key goals and motivations, and proposed a road map for action outlining commitments and measures to support artificial intelligence capacity-building for developing countries in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Mr. Maloor, in particular, sought the Committee's guidance on the appropriate scope and depth of the road map, as well as on the possibility of engaging more systematically with experts and leading thinkers, including in academia, on artificial intelligence, to provide input to Committee's internal process.

15. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed support for the progress made and affirmed its agreement with the shared principles guiding the system-wide effort. With regard to the road map for action, members recalled the intended objective of the initiative, namely, supporting capacity-building in the area of artificial intelligence for developing countries, and urged a more prioritized and bottom-up approach, guided by and respecting the agreed scope. Some of the proposed measures were seen as being too inwardly focused on building internal capacity within the United Nations system, as too technical or as potentially duplicating other ongoing efforts, and were thus considered to be outside of the mandated scope or focus on cross-system coordination and collaboration.

16. The Committee suggested that the road map for action be prioritized and that it be focused more directly on capacity-building for developing countries in the area of artificial intelligence and on such specific needs as bridging the digital divide, infrastructure, artificial intelligence governance and human rights, with a distinct emphasis on reaching the bottom billion. Members also underscored the need for greater synergy between the road map and the Committee's other workstreams (i.e., the future of work and of learning) and the integration of the recommendations reviewed favourably during the earlier discussion through the lens of developing countries. Members also stressed the importance of complementing and not

duplicating other ongoing efforts within the United Nations system, including the Secretary-General's strategy on new technologies, the "AI for Good" series of meetings of United Nations partners organized by ITU and the ITU compendium of activities on artificial intelligence carried out by the United Nations or under intergovernmental processes and platforms.

17. There was strong support for the Committee to pursue dialogue and engage with the outside expertise available in academia, the private sector and civil society as part of its internal coordination process. This workstream, given the nature of the topic, was seen as being especially able to benefit from outside views and expertise prior to the completion of the strategic approach. The Committee noted the importance of focusing such engagement on respect for the principles of due diligence through the lens of human rights.

18. In conclusion, the Chair noted the Committee's agreement with the guiding principles and the overall framework and stressed the need to streamline and prioritize the road map for action on the basis of the Committee's comments. The Chair underscored the importance of ensuring synergy with the other workstreams and integrating the recommendations formulated from the perspective of developing countries, especially, the bottom billion, that had been received positively by the Committee during the previous discussion on another agenda item.

Conclusion

19. **The Committee reaffirmed the three-step approach for supporting artificial intelligence capacity-building for developing countries and approved the shared guiding principles and the system-wide framework. It requested ITU, in cooperation with interested agencies and taking into account the comments made, to finalize the road map for system-wide action and to present the full draft of the strategic approach for the Committee's consideration at its thirty-seventh session, bearing in mind the need for prioritization, complementarity and a clearer focus on the bottom billion and ensuring that no one is left behind. The Committee also supported engagement with outside expertise as a valuable input to the internal coordination process.**

Future of work

20. In introducing the agenda item, the Chair noted that much progress had been made in developing a system-wide strategy on the future of work since the question was first taken up by the Committee, at its thirty-fourth session. Given that the analysis, vision and guiding principles presented in the draft strategy reflected the Committee's previous feedback, the Chair directed the current discussion to concentrate on the key elements of implementation and modalities for action and follow-up.

21. Sangheon Lee (ILO) presented the current draft, soliciting feedback on practical actions to facilitate strong and effective joint work and collaboration across the system within the areas outlined (research and knowledge-sharing; implementation, monitoring and measuring impact; new technologies and innovation within the United Nations system; education and training systems and lifelong learning; policy development and technical assistance; norms and standards; and multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives to promote a fairer future of work). He invited members' views on mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and adjust the strategy; achieving a high level of visibility for the strategy; aligning it with related initiatives on artificial intelligence and education for greater coherence and synergies; and using partnerships to maximize the strategy's impact. At the next session of the Committee, the full-

fledged strategy, incorporating the Committee's current round of input and guidance, would be presented for approval in principle, pending the outcome of the June 2019 ILO centenary conference.

22. The Committee was supportive of the proposed implementation and follow-up elements, with many members highlighting workstreams to which their organizations were interested in contributing. It was agreed that the strategy should be ambitious and assert United Nations values and norms as basic rights. Recalling the earlier discussion on the bottom billion, members observed that the initiative had great potential to promote equality within and between countries and ensure that no one is left behind.

23. The Committee was of the view that the strategy would benefit from the incorporation of a stronger social perspective, for example by better addressing the evolution of society, including the changing world of work, the relationship between jobs and human dignity and the repercussions of social exclusion. Health and safety could be expressly targeted, for example by promoting the review of outdated systems for health and safety governance. Members noted that the future world of work required a re-examination of informality. In that vein, the strategy should take a stronger stance with respect to defining acceptable parameters for new forms of work and ensuring adequate social protection rather than treating precarious or unprotected forms of work as inevitable.

24. Given the disruptive yet transformative impacts of technology, the Committee underscored the need for lifelong learning, especially of digital skills. In view of demographic trends, while the strategy's focus on providing life skills and economic opportunities for youth was well appreciated, members called for a stronger emphasis on addressing the needs of ageing workers and providing a more universal approach to social protection for young and old alike. In this context, the Committee reiterated the numerous interlinkages and complementarities between this initiative and the system-wide strategic approach on education and learning for all.

25. Members emphasized the need for the strategy to be actionable and results oriented, with an overarching timeline for operationalization within which individual United Nations entities could plan their contributions. The importance of finding traction and making an impact at the country level was underscored, and suggestions were made to ensure that the initiative would be reflected in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and that it would engage the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to support the integrated operationalization of the strategy, provide guidance to United Nations country teams on their contribution to the practical implementation of the strategy and mobilize national-level multi-stakeholder debates and action. Many of the policy issues identified within the strategy were transboundary in nature, and it was therefore stressed that the regional dimension of implementation could be strengthened.

26. With respect to partnerships, the Committee considered it important that the strategy more prominently identify organized labour as a key actor and aim to stimulate partnerships between the labour and health sectors. Broader coalitions — beyond governments, employers and workers — would need to be mobilized in order for the initiative to succeed.

27. With regard to promoting the visibility of the strategy, members suggested that the initiative be linked to broader global policy events that would generate global advocacy impacts, in particular the ILO centenary conference and the 2019 high-level political forum, which was due to review Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work.

Conclusion

28. **The Committee requested ILO to continue to work with interested agencies to deliver to the Committee a full draft of the system-wide strategy, reflecting its deliberations, at its thirty-seventh session.**

Future of learning and education

29. The Chair recalled that Committee, while considering the implications of disruptive technologies at its thirty-fifth session, had recognized the critical importance of education and lifelong learning in preparing current and future generations for rapidly changing societies. The Committee had agreed that the United Nations system played an important role in promoting an inclusive and equitable approach to addressing opportunities and risks facing the future of education and learning and that the Committee could contribute by developing a system-wide approach, with a strong focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized and on leaving no one behind.

30. The Committee had before it for review a proposed road map, prepared by an 18-entity task group under the leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Committee was invited to provide guidance on the suggested focus, approach and next steps towards the development of a system-wide strategic approach, to be presented for its consideration at the thirty-seventh session. Given the close linkages with the Committee's workstreams on artificial intelligence and the future of work, the Committee was encouraged to ensure due coordination and synergy.

31. In presenting the proposed road map, Jo Bourne (UNICEF) and Sobhi Tawil (UNESCO) described the aim of the initiative as providing a holistic system-wide approach to support member States in delivering inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all to prepare their citizens to adapt to future realities and demands. The proposal called for a light-touch approach that prioritized the delivery of a limited number of critical interventions in areas where whole-system engagements and collective actions added value and complemented activities and mechanisms already in place, including the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, on education and learning. Accordingly, the proposal foresaw five core themes: (a) the synergistic use of innovation and technologies; (b) continuous learning through the life cycle; (c) equity, empowerment and support for learning for the most marginalized; (d) partnerships, coordination and optimization in financing and resource mobilization; and (e) skills acquisition and activation.

32. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed broad support for the proposed road map, conveying its appreciation in particular for a strategically prioritized light-touch approach that complemented existing frameworks and mechanisms. Noting the strong relevance of education and learning for a range of development outcomes, the Committee highlighted the importance of an integrated and intersectoral approach, anchored in the 2030 Agenda. In this context, members highlighted the linkage between education, health and women's empowerment. The centrality of education for the girl child, including comprehensive sexual health education, was also noted. Members observed that a growing trend towards the privatization of education posed a particular challenge to the fulfilment of the right to education and the responsibility of the State to meet its obligations. Access to lifelong learning, including e-learning, was considered a useful tool for overcoming the rural-urban divide and contributing to the sustainable rural development of marginalized rural populations.

33. The Committee expressed broad support for the five core themes that constituted the central elements of the proposed action framework, and some members suggested the possibility of further simplification, including by streamlining the priority areas. While appreciating that education served broad purposes, many members highlighted the critical linkage between education and learning on the one hand and work on the other, urging maximum coordination and synergy between the two workstreams. It also stressed the transformational power of technology and thus the need to build digital skills and literacy. Furthermore, the importance of ensuring operational relevance and impact on the ground was noted, including by linking that approach to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process at the country level.

34. In conclusion, the Chair confirmed the Committee's strong support for the strategically focused light-touch approach as proposed. He requested UNESCO and UNICEF to continue to co-lead the work and, taking into consideration the feedback and suggestions provided, to prepare a full draft of the strategic approach for the Committee's consideration at its thirty-seventh session.

Conclusion

35. **The Committee approved the proposed road map for a United Nations system-wide strategic approach for achieving inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all, and requested UNESCO and UNICEF to co-lead the process to develop, taking into account the comments made, a full-fledged draft for the Committee's consideration at its thirty-seventh session.**

IV. Contributing system-wide analysis for the upcoming deliberations of the Chief Executives Board

Drug policy

36. The Chair introduced the item, which was placed on the agenda pursuant to the request of the CEB Chair that the Committee contribute an analytical input to the Board's upcoming deliberations in the second regular session of 2018. Noting that drug problems affected hundreds of millions of people worldwide, the Chair underscored their complex multifaceted nature, which had significant implications across the Sustainable Development Goals and the various pillars of United Nations mandates, requiring broader cross-sector and cross-pillar engagement and coherent system-wide perspectives.

37. In 2009, Member States, in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, set 2019 as the target date for States to eliminate or reduce significantly and measurably the supply of and demand for illicit drugs, the diversion of and trafficking in precursors and money-laundering. In 2016, the General Assembly held a special session to review progress and adopted an outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex). To ensure effective and coherent United Nations support in the comprehensive implementation of those commitments, the Secretary-General placed the issue on the agenda of his Executive Committee in April 2017, tasking UNODC, together with relevant entities, to take concrete steps to improve coordination.

38. In view of the ministerial segment to be convened by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs during its sixty-second session, in March 2019, the CEB Chair decided to include an item on drug policy on the Board's agenda in order to ensure that the United Nations system had a common position. Bearing in mind the efforts already ongoing within the framework of the Executive Committee, the role of High-

level Committee on Programmes was to support the deliberations of CEB by contributing an input for discussion presenting broader inter-agency and systems perspectives. The Committee had before it a draft paper, prepared through a consultative process coordinated by UNODC, providing an overview of the world drug problem and a balanced analysis of key issues surrounding the international policy discourse.

39. In introducing the draft paper, Jean-Luc Lemahieu and Chloe Carpentier (UNODC) underscored the complexity of the issue in the highly politicized and polarized policy environments. The international drug control regime, through its complementary and reinforcing norms, standards and institutions, represented the overarching global consensus and provided the overall framework for international cooperation. The presenters noted that despite divergent views on specific aspects of the framework, Member States remained focused on the implementation of agreed commitments within existing institutions. The paper before the Committee contained an overview of relevant developments in international policy discourse to inform the forthcoming discussion by CEB. It proposed a basis for a common position, building on key messages of the United Nations system prepared in 2017, and put forward a concrete suggestion for system-wide data collection efforts to support and promote the evidence-based implementation of international commitments.

40. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee underscored the importance of a coherent United Nations system position, expressing overall support for building it on the basis of the 2017 joint messages. Members reaffirmed, as an overarching perspective, the United Nations system's commitment to supporting the norms and policies agreed by Member States, including the outcome of the special session, as well as the 2030 Agenda and international human rights standards. The Committee, to that end, underscored the importance of ensuring collaboration and coordination across the system in promoting comprehensive, balanced, integrated, evidence- and rights-based and development-oriented responses to the world drug problem. In view of this convergence of views, the Committee strongly recommended that section IV of the draft be revised to ensure that the paper accurately reflected the United Nations system's shared commitment.

41. While it considered the discussion paper to be educational, by providing highly detailed information on policy issues and ongoing efforts, the Committee strongly advised that a much shorter, more streamlined and less technical paper, providing, nevertheless, sufficient substance at the strategic level, would be more appropriate for the purposes of CEB.

42. Several members underscored that the discussion paper needed to be more strongly anchored in the 2030 Agenda and that health and human rights-related goals and targets should be better highlighted and integrated across the document. Members stressed in particular that issues related to human rights, public health, harm reduction, alternative development and social justice, as well as the link between the world drug problem and political instability in some regions and countries, needed to be articulated better and reflected more clearly. The Committee also underscored the need to ensure more balanced tone and coverage in outlining those issues and varying perspectives.

43. The Chair, while recalling that the Committee's task was to provide CEB with a discussion input rather than with a definitive consensus, noted with appreciation that the Committee had shown overall support for using the proposed United Nations common position as the basis for the Board's consideration. The Committee was of the strong opinion that in order for the draft to be suitable for a principal-level meeting, it needed to be streamlined without losing the necessary substance at the strategic level. The Chair recapitulated the Committee's recommendations that the

paper be more deeply anchored to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to ensure better integration of human rights- and health-related targets, and that it recognize the linkages, in some circumstances, between drug-related measures and political instability. The Committee had expressed a clear preference for revising section VI of the draft to more accurately reflect the United Nations system's shared commitment to the agreed global norms and standards and to the pursuit of coherent system-wide support for a truly balanced and comprehensive approach, guided by the agreed framework of policies in drug control, sustainable development, human rights and other relevant areas.

Conclusion

44. **The Committee requested UNODC, in consultation with the task group, to finalize the discussion paper, taking duly into account the comments made by the Committee, for onward submission to CEB at its second regular session of 2018.**

V. Scoping discussion

Strategic foresight: towards a shared vision for supporting the Sustainable Development Goals in an uncertain future

45. The Chair invited the Committee to engage in a retreat-style exploratory discussion, supported by a facilitator, Arndt Husar, on the concept and application of strategic foresight. Guided by the orientation paper, including discussion questions, its aim was to enhance members' collective understanding of strategic foresight; consider its merits, relevance and feasibility for the Committee's ongoing and future work in system-wide policy coordination and programmatic coherence; and explore a possible role for the Committee in enhancing foresight capacities in the United Nations system.

46. The facilitator provided an overview of how the application of strategic foresight presented an opportunity to move from an exploratory or deductive approach to understanding future potential (i.e., observing historic and current events to anticipate projected or probable futures) to an inductive or anticipatory approach that permitted moving beyond preconceptions of what was possible. The aim was to empower decision makers to navigate towards the preferred future — in the case of the United Nations, the world envisioned in the 2030 Agenda. Given that the path to 2030 was not linear and that development efforts would likely be disrupted along the way, agility and flexibility would be needed to tackle challenges as they arose, and those who incorporated foresight techniques in their working methods would be better prepared and more resilient in the face of uncertainty and disruption. Noting that a range of foresight methodologies were available, the facilitator introduced a number of techniques [1] and applications [2] based on the example of the United Nations Development Programme's "empowered futures" initiative, which is aimed at

[1] Scanning: exploring the external environment to better understand the nature and pace of change and identify opportunities and challenges; visioning: a participatory method for identifying, developing and enriching a compelling, preferred future scenario; backcasting: working backward from the future to understand and explore alternative future paths; wind-tunnelling: stress-testing goals and objectives against different future scenarios. For details see: www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/global-centre-for-public-service-excellence/ForesightManual2018.html.

[2] Visionary foresight: helps to create empowering narratives in a rapidly transforming world; strategic foresight: identifies strategic opportunities in the emerging future to achieve such visions as the Sustainable Development Goals; adaptive foresight: strengthens the resilience of policies and planning; creative foresight: innovates the design and delivery of public services.

providing developing country Governments and other stakeholders with capacities and tools to shape and realize their own futures. In addition, he noted a number of United Nations system activities employing "futures thinking", pointing to a potential rationale for promoting synergies among them and pursuing system-wide engagement on foresight.

47. To illustrate how foresight techniques were already being applied in a United Nations system context, Klaus Tilmes (World Bank Group) shared his experience in integrating foresight into and across the World Bank's practices and capacities to make better sense of emerging technologies and their accompanying disruptions. With the support and sponsorship of the President of the World Bank, he and his small team pursued the task holistically, addressing internal, global and country-level perspectives. They engaged both staff and outside experts in examining the issues and opportunities, identified the Bank's core corporate contributions in the context of the fast-changing environment and established a variety of mechanisms, including a "disruptive technology network", two labs, on artificial intelligence and blockchain, and pilot programmes with private sector partners, to reorient the Bank to enhance its ability to navigate the pathway of disruption. Mr. Tilmes reported that in nine months, the Bank's management and board of directors had affirmed the critical nature of the effort, future awareness had risen among Bank staff and organizational mindsets had begun to shift. He concluded that the United Nations system, with its shared agenda and wealth of entity-specific insights, would benefit from a broad and collaborative use of foresight, which would enable it to speak with one voice and in a shared language.

48. Presenting a second case study, Riel Miller (UNESCO) addressed the broad value of promoting "futures literacy": the capacity to imagine the future and use it in planning and decision-making. The UNESCO Futures Literacy Laboratories had been established to provide a wide range of actors with the capacity to address their most pressing issues by "using the future", or identifying their goals and applying their imagination to realize their aspirations. As with foresight, there were different techniques and methodologies, many of which were easy to learn to apply. In an era of disruption and change, Mr. Miller stressed the timeliness of developing a futures literacy capability within United Nations system organizations to improve support to beneficiaries. Once the ways in which the future could be used are better understood, it will be more possible to create the conditions for change.

49. In the ensuing interactive discussion, members responded positively to the presentations and were enthusiastic about applying the practices within their organizations as well as in the context of the Committee's joint efforts. They appreciated the relevance of strategic foresight for United Nations system efforts, seeing the potential for mainstreaming its use across a wide range of application areas. The Committee strongly affirmed that strategic foresight was well aligned with its mandate and role as a think tank for the system and that it was important to lead by example in approaching its work through the lens of the future. Integrating foresight approaches in its policy and strategy development toolbox would expand the Committee's ability to engage system-wide with possible futures and improve its anticipatory capacity.

50. Members identified a variety of benefits for the Committee (and by extension CEB) of engaging with foresight techniques. Of great relevance in this inter-agency context, such engagement would enhance the ability to interact across silos, practices and organizations, bringing in expertise from unusual quarters and challenging assumptions. Pathways by which to navigate towards the "desired future" in a way that is more agile and flexible could be identified, which would also facilitate the creation of a detailed rendering of the 2030 future. Recognizing the difficulty of fully predicting the future, members expressed the view that the use of foresight techniques

would demonstrate that the Committee had based its recommendations not only on a statistical analysis of historical or concurrent data (which nevertheless remained valuable inputs), but had also leveraged sense-making processes by exploring alternative futures and improving the futures literacy capabilities of the United Nations system. Perhaps most importantly, embracing this practice would demonstrate thought leadership through true system-wide engagement on challenges that are over the horizon.

51. Several potential areas of engagement around those strategic techniques were proposed. Foremost among them, members supported the integration of foresight approaches in the Committee's work with a view to making it more anticipatory. The Committee could commission studies or conduct exercises on key emerging issues to identify policy pathways and facilitate engagement. A pilot project on the application of strategic foresight could demonstrate its relevance for the Committee's core work on policy and programme coordination, as well as its ability to identify emerging issues that could influence the Committee's agenda. One possibility was to apply strategic foresight to the ongoing analysis of the future of work, learning and education, and artificial intelligence, although caution was urged to avoid stalling work that was nearing finalization. Proposals for new thematic options to be examined through a "futures lens" included ageing, climate change, urbanization (possibly with a specific angle on sustainable consumption and production) and green economy/green jobs. The possible merit of collaborating with such other inter-agency bodies as the United Nations Strategic Planning Network was also mentioned.

52. More broadly, the Committee and its members could raise awareness of and advocate for futures thinking, specifically to take a longer-term view of sustainable development beyond 2030 and appeal for bold leadership in pursuit of the "desired future" scenario. It was suggested that some of the United Nations system work on foresight could be presented and its value demonstrated to Member States at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. The need to press for more cohesive strategic planning processes at the country level was also mentioned, for example, through United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance on applying foresight and by making foresight tools and knowledge, including outside expertise, available to country teams and learning from their experiences.

53. Members saw strong demand for a practical initiative to promote inter-agency information-sharing on the fragmented foresight practices, products and capacities currently in use across the United Nations system through some form of knowledge hub. Merit was seen in establishing an experience-sharing network for practitioners that were already active across the system and in gradually building and enhancing internal collaboration and cross-fertilization. A Committee-hosted community of practice on strategic foresight could not only enable members to share experiences, exchange lessons learned and enhance the quality of their respective work, but also serve as a resource pool enabling the wider adoption and deployment of foresight approaches across the system in support of sustainable development. The community of practice could also serve as a collective interface for engaging and collaborating with external experts, including in non-United Nations international organizations or academia. Members expressed the view that the Committee would benefit from hosting a community of practice, as it could provide useful inputs to the Committee's ongoing analytical and strategy development work and, as appropriate, its support to CEB.

54. To broaden capabilities beyond the existing community of practitioners, it was proposed that the Committee promote capacity development among United Nations system entities and help initiate a shared facility to promote the coherent and systematic application of strategic foresight throughout the system by, for example, combining tools and developing joint toolkits. The ILO International Training Centre,

with its existing foresight capacities, and the United Nations System Staff College were mentioned as mechanisms that could potentially be leveraged for that purpose.

55. It was suggested that the Committee sponsor the development of methodologies to overcome blind spots and remove obstacles to seeing opportunities, threats and risks that were due to assumptions and restrictive political orthodoxies. It could also promote the joining up of sources and the synthesis of information on specific contexts to better detect weak signals or flag disruptions that would otherwise not get attention. Furthermore, the Committee could support the joint creation of foresight products for use by United Nations system organizations, Member States and the general public to help guide work towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

56. Throughout the session, members highlighted recent work in their organizations, which had a wide range of maturity and complexity. In the sharing of experiences, a number of success factors were identified, the most prominent of which were senior-level buy-in to back an initiative, provide visibility and engage with the outputs; proper scoping and design and a sound evidence base to inform the foresight process; engagement with multidisciplinary stakeholders to challenge dominant assumptions and add new perspectives during scanning exercises; communications and engagement with wider internal stakeholders (beyond those directly engaged in strategic planning and policy development); creating foresight products that were actionable today; and the mainstreaming of futures literacy in the Organization.

57. In closing the scoping discussion, the Chair noted the strong and enthusiastic support of the Committee for engaging with alternative futures and deploying foresight approaches in its work. Seeing that effort as having the potential to serve as a vector for change in the United Nations system, he stressed the need to widely propagate the use of foresight throughout United Nations organizations, including at the country level. The Chair observed that promoting, coordinating and pursuing concrete and targeted engagement with strategic foresight on a system-wide basis offered a promising opportunity for the Committee to further embody its expected role as a think tank for the system.

58. The Chair concluded that, given the Committee's views, two main streams of action could be pursued to realize considerable potential: first, foresight approaches could be applied to a pilot topic on the Committee's agenda as a way to familiarize members with the key concepts and methodologies and test and demonstrate their concrete relevance to the Committee's work in promoting system-wide policy coordination and programmatic coherence; and second, the Committee could explore ways to promote experience-sharing and capacity-building across the system in an effort to promote and support critical mass and a network of futures-literate organizations and individuals within the United Nations system.

Conclusion

59. **The Committee decided to: (a) pursue a pilot foresight exercise on an appropriate challenge and/or topic (to be selected) to explore and assess the practicality of integrating foresight approaches in its work with a view to enhancing its agenda-setting, deliberations and products; and (b) explore options to promote and support foresight capacities across the United Nations system and foster cross-agency and system-wide collaboration on foresight.**

VI. Progress reviews and other matters

Progress reviews: Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020; UN-Water; UN-Energy; and UN-Oceans

60. Further to its electronic reviews and endorsements in advance of the session, the Committee took note of the progress report on the ongoing effort to mainstream the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 into the work programmes of United Nations system organizations, submitted by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as well as of the progress reports of UN-Water, UN-Energy and UN-Oceans.

Other matters

Dates and location of the thirty-seventh session of the Committee

61. The Chair proposed the dates of 8 and 9 April 2019 for the Committee's thirty-seventh session, to be held at United Nations Headquarters, in New York.

Conclusion

62. **The Committee approved the dates and location of its thirty-seventh session: 8 and 9 April 2019 at United Nations Headquarters, in New York.**

Progress update: shared framework for action on equality and non-discrimination

63. The Chair recalled the Committee's process, co-led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to develop a shared United Nations system framework for action on equality and non-discrimination, which had been endorsed by the Board in 2016. He noted that the framework mandated the Committee to periodically review progress and impact at the strategic and global policy levels so as to strengthen coordination and coherence and identify gaps, while country-level implementation was being pursued through the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

64. The progress report on the framework highlighted that, despite significant achievements, more needed to be done, for example with respect to economic inequality, social protection systems and social/environmental or human rights impact assessments. Stressing the imperative to leave no one behind, the Committee supported the recommendation by the co-leaders that equality and non-discrimination be placed on the agenda of a future session of the Committee with a view to facilitating a more robust review to galvanize action to close the gaps identified.

Conclusion

65. ***The Committee decided to undertake a fuller review of the progress and* gaps in implementing the framework for action on equality and non-discrimination at its thirty-seventh session.**

Progress update: urbanization and sustainable development

66. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the proposal to revitalize the United Nations system's efforts in support of the New Urban Agenda, building on the policy paper developed by the Committee in 2016 as an input to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). Christopher Williams (United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)) provided the background and rationale for the proposal, recalling the recent intergovernmental decisions and the request made by the Senior Management Group. The Committee responded favourably to the proposal to establish a time-bound task team, led by UN-Habitat, to prepare, on the basis of the 2016 paper, a draft system-wide strategy for its consideration at the thirty-seventh session.

Conclusion

67. **The Committee approved the proposal to develop, building on its earlier analytical work and in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant global agreements, a system-wide strategy for sustainable urban development and requested UN-Habitat to lead a time-bound consultation process to prepare a draft for the Committee's consideration at the thirty-seventh session.**

Annex I

Agenda

Building system-wide knowledge and capacity through "deep-dive" analyses

1. Impact of frontier technologies on developing countries.

Promoting system-wide action on frontier challenges in support of the Sustainable Development Goals

2. Artificial intelligence: capacity development for developing countries.
3. Future of work.
4. Future of learning and education.

Contributing system-wide analysis for the upcoming deliberations of the Chief Executives Board

5. Drug policy.

Scoping discussion

6. Strategic foresight: towards a shared vision for supporting the Sustainable Development Goals in an uncertain future.

Progress reviews and other matters

7. Progress reviews: Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020; UN-Water; UN-Energy; and UN-Oceans.
8. Other matters:
   (a) Dates and location of the thirty-seventh session of the Committee;
   (b) Progress update: shared framework for action on equality and non-discrimination;
   (c) Progress update: urbanization and sustainable development.

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Guy Ryder (ILO)

Secretary: Kayoko Gotoh

Organization	*Name*
United Nations	
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Marion Barthelemy
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Hansjoerg Strohmeyer
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Craig Mokhiber
Regional commissions	Amr Nour
Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Daniele Violetti
Global Pulse	Robert Kirkpatrick
International Labour Organization	Andre Bogui
	Shengjie Li
	Dorothea Schmidt-Klau
	Sangheon Lee
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Beth Crawford
	James Azevedo Görgen
	Cristina Petracchi
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Marie-Ange Theobald
	Clare Stark
	Sobhi Tawil
	Riel Miller
International Civil Aviation Organization	Latifa Hadbi
World Health Organization	Shambhu Acharya
	Ivana Milovanovic
	Ivan Ivanov
World Bank Group	Jos Verbeek
	Klaus Tilmes
Universal Postal Union	Abdellatif Meskine

Organization	*Name*
International Telecommunication Union	Preetam Maloor
	Mario Castro Grande
International Maritime Organization	Arsenio Dominguez
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Cornelia Richter, Vice-President
	Charlotte Salford
	Ashwani Muthoo
	Shantanu Mathur
	Torben Nilsson
United National Industrial Development Organization	Tsung Ping Chung
World Tourism Organization	Zoritsa Urosevic
International Atomic Energy Agency	Nuno Luzio
International Organization for Migration	Ashraf El Nour
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Paul Akiwumi
	Clovis Freire
United Nations Development Programme	Maria Luisa Silva
United Nations Environment Programme	Maaike Jansen
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Andrew Harper
United Nations Children's Fund	Jo Bourne
	David Matern
	Lidia Tutarinova
	Tim Unwin
United Nations Population Fund	Ramiz Alakbarov
	Alexander Pak
World Food Programme	Jean-Pierre de Margerie
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Gillian Murray
	Jean-Luc Lemahieu
	Doris Resch
	Chloe Carpentier
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Christopher Williams
United Nations University	James Cockayne

Organization	*Name*
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Tim Martineau
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Patrick Grenard
Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination	Simona Petrova
	Federica Pietracci
	Xenia von Lilien
	Cheryl Stafford
	Marije van den Berg
	Arndt Husar (facilitator)